

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 SAM-01 SAJ-01 /059 W

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O R 021200Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6439

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 15694

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: MIKI EMERGES AS NEXT PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY: IN A SURPRISE MOVE TO END THE DEADLOCK BETWEEN FUKUDA AND OHIRA, LDP VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA NOMINATED TAKEO MIKI AS A COMPROMISE CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED PRIME MINISTER TANAKA. SHIINA'S NOMINATION WAS QUICKLY ACCEPTED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE PARTY, ALTHOUGH OHIRA AND HIS FACTION ATTEMPTED WITHOUT AVAIL TO STEM THE TIDE. THE MIKI GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE A RELATIVELY WEAK ONE. DESPITE MIKI'S REPUTATION AS A POLITICAL MAVERICK, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO INSTITUTE MAJOR CHANGES IN JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. TAKEO MIKI, 67, PERENNIAL LDP ASPIRANT, NOW APPEARS TO BE JAPAN'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER AFTER SUDDENLY EMERGING DECEMBER 1 AS THE DARK HORSE FRONT-RUNNER IN THE LDP SUCCESSION RACE PRECIPITATED BY
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TANAKA'S RESIGNATION ON NOVEMBER 26.

2. THE LDP HAD BEEN DEADLOCKED FOR FIVE DAYS OVER THE CHOICE BETWEEN TWO LEADING CONTENDERS, MASAYOSHI OHIRA WHO PUSHED FOR ELECTION BY PARTY CONVENTION AND TAKEO FUKUDA WHO INSISTED ON SELECTION THROUGH INTRA-MURAL CONSULTATIONS. LDP VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA, WHO ASSUMED THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR, CONVOKED A SERIES OF MEETINGS AMONG LDP ELDERS, DIETMEN ACCORDING TO SENIORITY, AND FACTIONS TO OBTAIN A PARTY CONSENSUS ON THE METHOD OF SELECTION AS WELL AS THE PARTY'S CHOICE. HE THEN HELD TALKS WITH THE FOUR LEADING CONTENDERS (OHIRA, FUKUDA, NAKASONE, AND MIKI) BOTH SEPARATELY AND JOINTLY FOR THE SAME PURPOSES.

3. AS OF NOVEMBER 29, SHIINA'S EFFORTS SERVED ONLY TO POLARIZE THE PARTY BETWEEN THE PRO-OHIRA AND PRO-FUKUDA GROUPS, AND TO POINT UP THE WIDESPREAD FEAR OF A PARTY SPLIT IF THE OHIRA SUPPORTERS WERE TO BRING ABOUT A SHOWDOWN THROUGH ELECTION AT A PARTY CONVENTION. THE MIKI FACTION AND THE FOUR "NEUTRAL" FACTIONS OF SHIINA, MIZUTA, FUNADA, AND ISHII STATED PUBLICLY THAT THEY WOULD BOYCOTT A CONVENTION, AND THE FUKUDA FACTION SAID IT WOULD CAMPAIGN TO BLOCK A CONVENTION. PARTY ELDERS, SUCH AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER SATO, THEREFORE JOINED THESE FORCES IN ASSERTING THAT AN ELECTION WAS TO BE AVOIDED AT ANY COST.

4. AT THE CRUCIAL MEETING OF THE FOUR CONTENDERS ON DECEMBER 1, WHICH SHIINA ANNOUNCED BEFOREHAND AS HIS "FINAL" EFFORT TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK, SHIINA TO THE SURPRISE OF VIRTUALLY ALL POLITICAL OBSERVERS SUDDENLY PROPOSED MIKI AS A COMPROMISE CANDIDATE. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT SHIINA HAD CLEARED THIS PROPOSAL WITH FUKUDA, AND POSSIBLY WITH NAKASONE AND MIKI AS WELL. IN ANY EVENT, MIKI ACCEPTED IMMEDIATELY, AS DID FUKUDA AND NAKASONE ALTHOUGH THE LATTER TWO ALSO WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS LATER THAT DAY OF OBTAINING THE CONCURRENCE OF THEIR FACTIONS. THE FOUR "NEUTRAL" FACTIONS FOLLOWED SUIT AND APPROVED THE PROPOSAL. THE TANAKA FACTION AT FIRST

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RESERVED ITS POSITION, WHILE INDICATING ITS UNHAPPINESS BY HAVING ONE OF ITS MEMBERS, SUSUMU NIKAI, SUBMIT HIS RESIGNATION (NOT ULTIMATELY ACCEPTED). FINALLY ON DECEMBER 2 THE FACTION GAVE ITS APPROVAL. OHIRA AND HIS FACTION INITIALLY REJECTED MIKI'S CANDIDACY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS SIMPLY A PRIVATE PROPOSAL OF SHIINA TO BE TESTED IN A PARTY ELECTION. HOWEVER, WHEN THEY FOUND THEMSELVES ISOLATED FOLLOWING

THE TANAKA FACTION DECISION, THEY TOO CAPITULATED BY
AGREEING TO GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER THE PARTT'S
EXECUTIVE BOARD DECIDED.

5. PROBABLE TIMETABLE OF EVENTS: AFTER MIKI'S
SELECTION IS FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE LDP EXECUTIVE,
AN LDP CAUCUS OF UPPER AND LOWER HOUSE MEMBERS WILL
BE CONVENED DECEMBER 4 TO GIVE UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO
SHIINA'S PROPOSAL. (INCIDENTALLY, HAD
THE MATTER BEEN PUT TO A CAUCUS VOTE EARLY DECEMBER
2, MIKI WOULD HAVE WON OVER OHIRRA BY A 60-40 MARGIN,
OR 245 VOTES FOR MIKI TO 155 FOR OHIRA.) THE CAUCUS'
CHOICE WILL BE RATIFIED AT AN LDP CONVENTION (DIET
CAUCUS PLUS ONE REP FROM EACH OF 47 PREFECTURES)
WHICH WILL BE CALLED IN JANUARY. MEANWHILE, THE LDP PRESIDENT
WILL BE ELECTED PRIME MINISTER AT THE EXTRAORDINARY
DIET SESSION CONVENING ON OR ABOUT DECEMBER 12.

6. ANY ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF MIKI'S
SUCCESSION TO THE TOP PARTY AND GOVERNMENT POSTS FOR
GOJ ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY MUST NECESSARILY BE
TENTATIVE. WE MAY GET A CLEARER PICTURE WHEN HIS
CABINET CHOICES ARE KNOWN LATER THIS MONTH.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 15694

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT WAS FORMED, WE BELIEVE THE MIKI PARTY EXECUTIVE AND GOVERNMENT ARE LIKELY TO BE RELATIVELY WEAK. MIKI WILL BE BOUND BY NEW GROUND RULES, PROPOSED BY SHIINA AND ACCEPTED BY THE MAJOR CONTENDERS ON NOVEMBER 29, DESIGNED TO LIMIT THE PARTY PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO CONTROL PARTY FINANCES AND TO ENHANCE HIS FACTIONAL STRENGTH WHILE IN OFFICE. THESE NEW RULES,, WHICH MIKI HIMSELF CHAMPIONED, WILL NOT PERMIT THE LDP SECRETARY GENERAL AND TREASURER TO BE SELECTED FROM THE SAME FACTION AS THE PARTY PRESIDENT AND WILL LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LARGE CORPORATE DONORS, REDUCING OVERALL PARTY REVENUES. MIKI WILL ALSO HAVE TO STRESS PARTY UNITY ONCE IN POWER AND WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO MAKE GESTURES TOWARD ALL-PARTY REPRESENTATION IN HIS CABINET. FURTHER, THE MIKI GOVERNMENT WILL BE FACING ROUGH SEAS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD IN THE FORM OF A TROUBLED DOMESTIC AND WORLD ECONOMY AND A DIFFICULT TIME OF TRIAL FOR CONSERVATIVES
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IN THE UNIFIED LOCAL ELECTIONS NEXT APRIL. ALL THESE FACTORS LEAD MANY OBSERVERS TO PREDICT A SHORT LIFE FOR THE MIKI ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION THAT MADE IT NECESSARY--THE CRISIS OF THE LDP AND THE OHIRA-FUKUDA IMPASSE--IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME AND TEND TO PROLONG ITS EXISTENCE AS A COMPROMISE REGIME.

7. AS FOR THE IMPACT A MIKI GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE ON SPECIFIC POLICIES, CERTAIN IMPLICATIONS MAY BE DRAWN FROM ITS LIKELY WEAKNESS AND FROM WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT MIKI'S CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY. A RELATIVELY WEAK PARTY AND GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION MAY MEAN LESS POSITIVENESS AND DECISIVENESS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN GENERAL, INCLUDING MATTERS RELATED TO ENERGY (ATOMIC POWER, OIL IMPORTS), SECURITY (BASE QUESTIONS) AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION. THERE MAY BE A PERCEPTIBLE SLOWING DOWN IN RESPONSE TIME ON MATTERS REQUIRING THE WORKING OUT OF AN INTRA-PARTY AND INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL CONSENSUS.

8. AMONG THE FACTORS THAT COMMENDED MIKI TO SHIINA AND THAT HAVE WON MIKI'S NOMINATION A FAVORABLE INITIAL PRESS REACTION IS HIS REPUTATION AS A MAN OF PRINCIPLE AND A "PROGRESSIVE". A CAREER

POLITICIAN AS OPPOSED TO EX-BUREAUCRAT AS MOST POSTWAR PRIME MINISTERS HAVE BEEN, MIKI HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS POPULIST LEANINGS AND RESPONSIVENESS TO POPULAR DEMANDS. DURING HIS TENURE AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY, HE WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ACTIVE IN THUMPING FOR ENFORCEMENT OF POLLUTION LAWS AND PUSHING FOR HIGHER STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, WHICH WON HIM PLAUDITS FROM THE PRESS BUT DID NOT ENDEAR HIM TO THE BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT. HIS CONSERVATIVE COLLEAGUES HAVE TENDED TO DISTRUST HIM AS A "MAVERICK" AND AS AN "IDEALIST" AND REPEATEDLY FRUSTRATED HIS EARLIER BIDS FOR POWER. HIS PRESENT EMERGENCE AS THE PARTY LEADER, A FIRST FOR THE CHIEFTAIN OF A MINOR FACTION IN POSTWAR JAPAN, REFLECTS THE DESPERATE SITUATION OF THE LDP FOLLOWING TANAKA'S FALL AND THE NEED TO PREVENT A POTENTIAL PARTY SPLIT

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AND TO REFURBISH THE PARTY IMAGE WITH A LEADER WHO HAS THE BEST REPUTATION AS A "CLEAN" POLITICIAN.

9. MIKI'S ADMINISTRATION WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO PREOCCUPY ITSELF WITH PRESSING DOMESTIC PROBLEMS RATHER THAN FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, ALTHOUGH HARDLY ANY JAPANESE DOMESTIC PROBLEM IS BASICALLY UNRELATED TO FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. MIKI'S RECORD AS FOREIGN MINISTER (1966-68) AND HIS FRIENDLY POSTURE SINCE GIVE US NO REASON TO BELIEVE JAPAN'S US POLICY UNDER MIKI WILL UNDERGO ANY MAJOR CHANGE. AS A PIONEER ADVOCATE OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH CHINA, MIKI WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE THE TANAKA-OHIRA STANCE IN THAT AREA. MIKI HAS ALSO TAKEN GREAT PAINS DURING THE PAST YEAR TO ASSURE US THAT JAPAN'S POLICY TOWARD THE ARABS, WHICH HE HAS FELT JAPAN HAS NEGLECTED IN THE PAST, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO SACRIFICE THE INTERESTS OF ISRAEL OR TO STAND IN THE WAY OF COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

10. FINALLY, WE MUST REMAIN HIGHLY TENTATIVE ABOUT THE MEANING OF THESE EVENTS OR THE CONTINUATION OF MODERATE CONSERVATIVE RULE IN JAPAN. WE FORESEE NO IMMEDIATE BASIC CHANGE IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CENTRAL POLITICAL FORCES, BUT THE TRENDS SINCE TANAKA CAME TO POWER IN 1972 MAY WELL BE A PART OF A LONGER TERM SHIFT IN THE BALANCE AND COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS IN THE CONSERVATIVE COALITION. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ANTICIPATE WITH ANY CLARITY THE NEW PATTERNS OF ALLIANCE AND INITIATIVE THAT COULD EMERGE. THE PRESSURE OF LEFTWING SUCCESSES IN RECENT YEARS,

CHALLENGES IN MANAGING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY
DURING THIS TROUBLED PERIOD, AND THE INFLUENCE OF A
NEW GENERATION OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS WITHIN THE
LDP, HOWEVER, MAKE CHANGE LIKELY, IN OUR VIEW. THE
ADVENT OF MIKI SEEMS TO US LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE SUCH
CHANGE, IN FACT, RATHER THAN SLOW IT. MUCH WILL DEPEND
ON HIS SUCCESS IN LIVING UP TO SHIINA'S EXPECTATIONS
FOR HIM AS THE HEALER OF PARTY DISCORD AND THE
REFORMER OF PARTY IMAGE--A TALL ORDER FOR ANYONE.
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